



Arizona Central West Zone Incident Management Team

February Fire NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
Monday, February 13, 2006 7:00 a.m.

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Acres: 3,615 acres	Start date: Monday, February 6, 2005
Cause: Human, under investigation	Location: 12 miles north of Payson, AZ
Containment: 35 percent	Fuels: Chaparral, pine and juniper
Terrain: Rough, broken, steep terrain	Total personnel: 539
Crews: 11 crews	Equipment: 22 engines, 7 dozers, 19 water tenders
Available air support: Six helicopters, two air tankers	

Stable weather conditions throughout the day on Sunday assisted firefighters in continued burnout operations on the February Fire. Several firefighter crews and engine crews are camped out at Camp Geronimo Boy Scout Camp and Bray Creek Ranch maintaining a protective vigil.

Progress has been steady since the Arizona Central West Zone Incident Management Team was assigned to the incident on February 9. Incident Commander John Philbin attributes much of the successful suppression efforts to forest personnel. “The Tonto National Forest has done an outstanding job of reducing fuel loading with recent fuel thinning projects and prescribed burns,” said Philbin. The incident commander also commended forest personnel on initial attack strategies and quick action in gaining additional resources needed to fight the fire. Deputy Incident Commander Tony Sciacca said he is pleased with Sunday’s progress and remains optimistic. “If the weather will continue to cooperate throughout the night, our target is to increase the burn to 4,200 acres by morning, creating what we believe will be an adequate buffer between the fire and unburned areas,” added Sciacca.

In the past five years, the Tonto National Forest had conducted thinning operations on nearly five thousand acres of forest land. Prescribed burns have also been a large part of the forest’s fuel reduction program. The thinned areas and previously burned areas were instrumental in stopping advance of the February Fire in several locations. The areas also provided secure anchor points for fire line construction.

The Control Road (FR 64) remains closed between the Geronimo Estates Roads (FR 458) and the Washington Park Road (FR 32). Residents may access their properties. The speed limit is 20 mph.

For additional information, updates and maps see www.fs.fed.us/r3/cwz/index.htm.